

trol of it, very naturally aroused earnest protest, and impaired confidence in the strict impartiality of the committee's decisions.

But party precedent authorized it, and protest and appeal were vain. The leaders of the committee had the courage of their kind. They went about their task openly and with slight regard for either the rights or the merits of their opponents. They adopted a set of rules, the chief of which was that there should be no roll-call save on the request of twenty members, refusing to cut it down to ten, though under the Constitution of the United States one-fifth of members present is a sufficient number for a roll-call in the Senate or House of Representatives. Having a solid and unshakable majority of thirty-seven in the committee, the leaders knew that twenty members could not be collected in opposition, and that embarrassing roll-calls could thus be avoided. Although President Taft sent a personal request that the hearings of the committee on contests be thrown open to members of the press, the committee voted to hold them behind closed doors, admitting only representatives of the three or four press associations.

It was after the committee had refused to reduce the number of names required for a roll-call from twenty to ten that the brand of "Steam Boiler" was applied to the committee's course. It was applied subsequently to the course of the convention, and adopted into general use both by the press in reporting its proceedings and by delegates on the floor.

Although the doors were closed to reporters generally, an occasional bit of illuminating information escaped from the committee room. One such was published in the *Chicago Tribune* on June 8, 1912, a few days after the committee began its work, as follows:

"While the ninth Alabama contest was under consideration, Senator W. Murray Crane suggested to several members of the committee that it would be wise tactics to seat the Roosevelt delegates.

" 'Big Steve' Stephenson, of Colorado, who holds a